

Whitestone Hebrew Centre Bulletin

12-45 Clintonville St. Whitestone, NY 11357



שלום

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Volume XXXI No. 5

March 2023

Adar — Nissan 5783

CELEBRATE PURIM AT WHC

Megilla Reading

Monday, March 6th -- 7:00 PM



President's Message

I write these words at the beginning of the Hebrew month of Adar, the month in which we celebrate Purim – considered one of the most celebratory days on the Jewish calendar. But wait - There's more! (to quote the "as seen on TV" infomercials). The entire month is also singled out in the Talmud (specifically Ta'anit 29a) where we are commanded "When [the month of] Adar enters, we increase our joy. How exactly does one do that? There are events that automatically check that box. On Adar 1, my daughter Jenna added to our family by delivering a beautiful baby girl. I can't imagine topping that and yet – it's not the kind of thing you can count on every day of the month, let alone all the Adar's to come over the years. As I have long felt (and often said) – there is no one who's life is so empty of God's Presence they can't find a reason to thank Him every day. Looking at the story of Purim, one matter always stressed is that God Himself is not specifically referenced by Name. And yet, His Presence is felt throughout the

text. From the chain of events that led to Esther becoming queen, to Mordechai's discovery of the assassination plot, then the king's decree to hang Haman and his sons and finally, to spare the Jews. The Book of Esther serves as a reminder that even when God does not reveal Himself, His guidance still impacts the events of our lives. Recognizing God in every aspect of your life, even when things appear not to be going well become just as meaningful as the positive events. After all, they come from the same One source. We learn, according to our Sages teachings there are ways to jump start our appreciation of HaShem and taking joy in Adar by performance of Mitzvot (please join us Monday nights at 7PM online for Rabbi Axelman's Judaism 101 classes on this, and any other topic relating to our faith that comes to mind). There is much written about the general mitzvah of *tzedakah* (charity). Concern for the needy is a year-round responsibility for

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Corresponding/Recording Secretary -
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FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

As I write these words, Ukraine has been under attack by Russia for over a year, a conflagration which God-forbid, could conceivably lead to a World War and even a nuclear one. As Jews who daily pray for peace, we should always bear this in mind. We believe, as we say on the High Holidays, that the outcomes of such events is also decided by God. Likewise, we pray every Shabbos, "Our God and God of our ancestors: We ask Your blessings for our country, for its government, for its leader and advisors, and for all who exercise just and rightful authority. Teach them insights of Your Torah that they may administer all affairs of state fairly, that peace and security, happiness and prosperity, justice and freedom may forever abide in our midst". As I am often asked why we do not add special prayers for special occasions, I try to inform others that our regular, traditional prayers cover almost every scenario and should be recited accordingly, with the respect and seriousness that they deserve.

Sadly, in Israel, there have been far too many fatal terrorist attacks of late, with the frustration of some leading to retaliatory [attacks](#) by Israeli "settlers", that potentially could inflame tensions even further. Those of us who follow current events in Israel are aware of the "judicial revolution" taking place there. The issue is complicated and one that can be studied and discussed at any of our Monday evening Judaism 101 classes, but simply put, the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) is seeking to claw back power from the Judiciary and return it to the legislators, leading to weeks of riots and violence, as well as portrayal on vandalized [billboards](#) of those behind the judicial reform as Hitler. Though the impetus for the

Judicial reform is not coming only from the religious public, a recently publicized interview with the now-retired President of the Israeli Supreme Court, who almost single-handedly changed the nature of the Supreme Court in the mid-1990's, shows him saying he does not believe in God. Even though the Israeli legal system has never had much to do with Jewish Law, such a statement from such a prominent public figure who was in charge of the entire legal system in Israel, is bound to ruffle feathers, especially for those who pray three-times daily for God to "[restore our judges as in the beginning](#)".

In a previous column I had written that during my Sunday Talmud Class, one of the topics we had been discussing for months, related to end-of-life questions such as euthanasia, assisted suicide, advanced directives, DNR's, etc. is the Torah Commandment to "[not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor](#)", which is the source for having to rescue a fellow Jew from any type of danger. (For a more developed understanding of these concepts and pertinent laws in our religious texts, I encourage everyone to join our weekly Talmud Class, which is still being held on zoom and thus can be joined from the comforts of your home.) In this light, it is worth mentioning the Israeli [response](#) to the recent earthquake(s) in Turkey, for which Israel sent a specialized rescue team, which indeed rescued many Turks, and, per permission of the Chief Rabbi of Israel, violated Shabbos to continue searching for survivors. Sadly, for a certain part of the Turkish population, not only was this not appreciated, but the rescue crew was forced to leave Turkey under some type of [threat](#) to

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SISTERHOOD

Sisterhood President's Message

Sisterhood wishes everyone a Happy and Healthy Purim. Please do a mitzvah and call our senior members to ask if they need anything or just to chat for a while. Hearing a friendly voice will lift their spirits.

Naomi Gukowsky
Sisterhood President

Prayer Book Fund - December 2022

Inscribed Prayer Book in memory of Zula Schibuk
- Bonnie Buxbaum



January and February

Happy Birthdays

Benjamin Mandel	Peter Skow
Faye Mandel	Frank Smith
Mark Safran	Jared Young

March Happy Birthdays

Evelyn Apter	Ronald Kohn
Jill Dee	Ellis Rosenblatt
Naomi Gukowsky	Joshua Samet
Danielle Hoffmann	Madison Skow
Gloria Keller	Seena Slutsky

*Editor's note: If your birthday should be listed on this page and is not, please call the office at (718) 767-1500 and give us your date of birth. Thank you.



Ron Kohn
Mark Safran

Prayer for the Sick

If you would like a name mentioned in the weekly Prayer for the Sick, please email the name of the sick person and the name of that person's mother (if available) to the Rabbi, at rabbiaxelman@outlook.com. If you do not have access to email, please leave a message on the WHC office voice mail. There are names on our list for a very long time and we have no way of knowing who are still in need of prayers.



Thank you.

Making Contributions

For many years Sisterhood has offered the service of sending cards from all those who wish to acknowledge both Simchas and Condolences. The response from the recipients is most heart warming. The following funds are available:

- Simcha Fund\$10
- Chai Fund.....\$18
- Prayer Book Fund\$10

The recipient receives an acknowledgement of the contribution and it is printed in the monthly Bulletin, so all can share the feelings expressed. To place orders, call Patricia Smolker at (718) 746-7068.



Recent positive news generated by Israel, of which we can all be proud.
(Articles below are excerpts of originals only)



Israelis bringing miraculous cancer-killing tech to market

December 26, 2022

wnd.com



For many years, one of the world's top scientists, synthetic organic chemist James Tour, has led a team developing next-generation technology to target and kill cancer cells with virtually no side effects. Tour, a professor of chemistry at Rice University in Houston, is using nanomachines – the marvelous "motorized" organic molecules created in a lab that won three chemists a Nobel Prize in 2016 – to target cancerous cells. After affixing themselves to the diseased cell, Tour's novel nanomachines – equipped with a rotor and a stator – are activated by ultraviolet light to drill through the cell membranes at a speed of up to 3 million times per second. The cancer cells then can be killed either by injecting chemical agents to destroy them, or by repeatedly piercing the cell to blast open tumorous membranes until the cell dies by necrosis. The use of that technology to treat cancer and other diseases is closer to reality now, with the launch of an Israeli company called Nanorobotics. Therapies, though

perhaps six years from the market, are now in the pre-clinical trial stage for treatment of glioblastoma, non-muscle invasive bladder cancer, and squamous and basal cell carcinoma. WND spoke with the company's chief technology officer, Shlomo Nedvetzki, at the annual COSM conference in Bellevue, Washington, hosted by the Discovery Institute. Born in Israel, Nedvetzki is the son of immigrants from Eastern Europe. He has a Ph.D. in immunology from Hebrew University Medical School and a post-doctoral degree from Imperial College London. Nanorobotics is one of 16 companies, 15 of which are in Israel, spawned from Tour's research. But Nanorobotics is the only one based on Tour's nanomachine technology. What is it about Israel, WND asked in the video interview (embedded below), that so many of the companies are based there? "Well, I think Israel is the holy land," he replied, smiling. "It's a holy, special place, and I think that's why Professor Tour is very connected to Israel."

Israel ranks among 10 most powerful countries in annual list; 4th strongest military

January 2, 2023

[Times of Israel](http://TimesofIsrael)

Israel is one of the 10 most powerful, politically influential, and militarily strong countries in the world, according to a roundup for 2022 published by US News & World Report. The outlet also found that the Jewish state has among the strongest international alliances. Overall, Israel ranked 37th "best" country in the world out of 85 on the yearly list, now in its seventh year. Among countries considered most powerful because they "consistently dominate news headlines, preoccupy policymakers and shape global economic patterns," US News & World Report put Israel in tenth place. Top of the list was the United States, followed by China and then Russia. These are countries whose "foreign policies and military budgets are tracked religiously. When they make a pledge, at

least some in the international community trust they will keep it. These countries project their influence on the world stage," the outlet said. Israel was tenth in the ranking for countries that have the "Strongest International Alliances," as viewed by global survey respondents. Israel's highest ranking was for its military, which was placed fourth, behind Russia, the US, and China. As for political influence, Israel was put in sixth place, just behind Germany and ahead of France.



Israeli scientists find groundbreaking approach for treating Alzheimer's

February 19, 2023

jpost.com



Growing evidence points to a metabolic impairment in Alzheimer's disease (AD) patients, whose number worldwide is projected to reach 135 million by 2050. Neurology researchers say AD starts to develop several decades before the onset of dementia and the deterioration of cognitive function. Reduced metabolism results from a dysfunction of the mitochondria, which produce most of the energy in cells. It is also involved in cell death,

inflammation and immune response. Even though AD is linked to mitochondrial dysfunction, there are no current drug candidates that target this aspect. Researchers at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beersheba are proposing a new treatment approach by targeting the mitochondrial gatekeeper – the voltage-dependent anion channel-1 (VDAC1) – which controls mitochondrial activity and cell life and death. The new proposed target and therapy demonstrated

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PURIM LAWS AND CUSTOMS

Purim 5783 begins on the evening of Monday, March 6th and ends at dark the next evening. Though sometimes thought of as a "minor holiday", because one is allowed to do work on that day unlike Shabbat and "major holidays", Purim celebrates the Jewish people being saved from total annihilation throughout the Persian empire. These events, described in the Megillat Esther, which we read publicly on Purim, took place some time between the 6th and 4th centuries B.C.E. (there are sources for several different time periods) before the Jews were allowed to return to Israel from exile and re-build the Temple. Considering how we appropriately mourn the various times in Jewish history when the Jewish people were subjected to slaughter and genocide, I often think that the celebration of avoiding such a catastrophe should be more deeply felt.

Purim is celebrated with four Mitzvot and several customs

(all of which should be performed on the day of Purim)

as prescribed in the [Megilla](#), which per tradition was written by Mordechai and Esther, both of whom were prophets.

- (1) **Reading of the Megilla**, preferably with a minyan in a synagogue, on both the evening and the day of Purim.



- (2) **Shalach Manot** (or *Mishloach Manot*): sending gifts of food to a friend. This Mitzvah is fulfilled by delivering two ready-to-eat food items, each requiring a different *Bracha* (blessing) before eating, to at least one person. For example, an orange and an apple are both fruit, the blessing before eating them is the same and therefore this does not fulfill the Mitzvah. Luckily, chocolate has a different blessing. Always a good thing to send along with the fruit! Same with wine or liquor.



- (3) **Matanot La'evyonim** (gifts to the poor): this Mitzvah is more important than *Shalach Manot* but unfortunately often receives less attention. This mitzvah is fulfilled by giving monetary charity to at least two poor people. This is often accomplished collectively by giving money beforehand or on Purim to the Rabbi (or anyone so designated) who will turn the money over to poor people.



- (4) **Seudat Purim**: having a festive meal on the day of Purim. This custom has been neglected in many communities, but is alive and well in many places in Israel as well as in the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities in N.Y. and elsewhere. The Mitzvah of getting drunk "until one does not know the difference between Haman and Mordechai" during this meal, cited in the Talmud, has been interpreted literally and has also been interpreted as drinking more than one is accustomed to and going to sleep.



- (5) Among the other customs of Purim are making noise when Haman's name is mentioned during the reading of the megilla, eating Hamantashen and wearing masks or costumes.



President's Message

(Continued from page 1)

the Jew, but in Adar, such acts of kindness take on an elevated luster for the giver. On Purim particularly, it is a special mitzvah to remember the poor. Give charity to at least two, but preferably more, individuals on Purim day. This mitzvah is best fulfilled by giving directly to the needy (may I suggest a good way to do this is via the Rabbi's Fund that helps those in need who've reached out to us). As we find in the Talmud.....

"Tzedakah (charity) is equal to all the other commandments combined," - (Baba Batra 9a); "Greater is tzedakah than all the sacrifices" – Sukkah 49b. And please don't forget that our Synagogue itself is always in need. Please support and help maintain our Shul so that it may in turn serve the Community. Purim Samayach! See you in Shul

From the Rabbi's Study

(Continued from page 2)

their safety. For a discussion of any of the halachic issues or the Israeli politics involved in this mission, our Judaism 101 Class is the perfect venue.

For the last several weeks, our Talmud Class has been focusing on various Rabbinic prohibitions that were instituted to fend

off intermarriage and assimilation. Studying these subjects has led us to a fascinating exploration of how foods are made, now and throughout history, for which youtube and the internet in general has been a valuable source of information. I wish all a Happy Purim!



Thank you for Donations -- January and February 2023

Yahrzeit

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 Martha Dressler
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 Eva Weiss
 Sandy Westen

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For kiddush in memory of Mark's mother, Rita Rubin

Mark & Cheryl Rubin

For Kaddish for Dr. Maurice Lippmann

Marilyn Gordon

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WHC BULLETIN BY EMAIL!



If you would like to receive a copy of the bulletin by email, in addition to the printed version, please send your email address to haxelman@gmail.com and let us know. The email version appears in color and will reach you several days before the hard copy. Thank you!

SCHEDULE OF WHC CLASSES

(led by Rabbi Axelman)

Sundays @ Time TBA -- Talmud Class

Mondays @ 7:00 PM -- Judaism 101

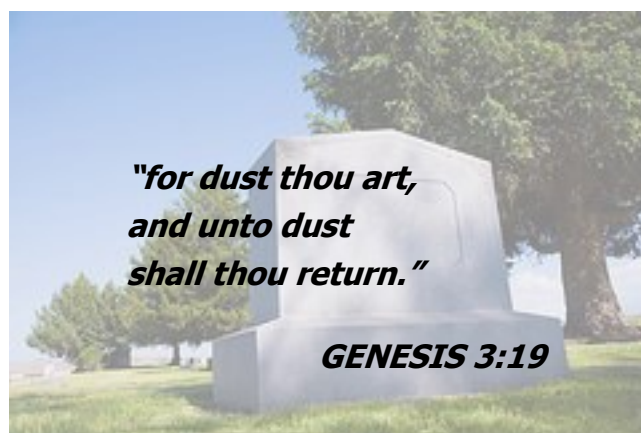
Explore Your Questions



Please check our website for updated days and times of classes.
Currently classes are being streamed on zoom and not being held in person.

Whitestone Hebrew Centre Congregational Cemetery

**Burial Plots Available
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I Stand with Israel

(Continued from page 4)

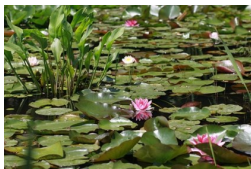
significant improvement across multiple parameters in mouse models. The research was recently reported in the prestigious journal Translational Neurodegeneration under the title

“Targeting the overexpressed mitochondrial protein VDAC1 in a mouse model of Alzheimer’s disease protects against mitochondrial dysfunction and mitigates brain pathology.”

Technion Scientists ‘Learning from the Lotus Flower’

November 30, 2022


[Jewish Press](#)



Scientists at the Israel Institute of Technology — the Technion — have received a prestigious \$1.5 million research grant to develop clean anti-fungal technology inspired by the natural properties of the lotus plant.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), fungal diseases are responsible for destroying a third of all food crops annually, causing immense economical loss and adding to global poverty. To treat these diseases, farmers are forced to use synthetic fungicides which are effective, but their extensive overuse and misuse have devastating impacts. Now, Professor Boaz Pokroy and Professor Ester Segal at the

Technion have proposed an environmentally friendly alternative for the exploration of which they received the EIC Pathfinder grant. Some plants, like lotus and broccoli, naturally exhibit anti-adhesive wax crystals on their leaf surfaces that prevent pathogens from attaching to the plant, as the wax renders the plant inaccessible. Inspired by the crystals of the lotus and the broccoli, Prof. Pokroy from the Faculty of Materials Science and Engineering and Prof. Segal from the Faculty of Biotechnology and Food Engineering created SafeWax, a non-toxic biodegradable formulation made from renewable materials, that can be sprayed on any plant and has the same effect as natural plants’ wax.




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